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Nor is this a mere passing thought of a poet writing laudatory verse, for Dryden refers to Shakespeare in the preface to *All for Love* as the one "who began Dramatique Poetry amongst us," and again in the *Discourse on Satire* he speaks of "Shakespeare, who created the Stage among us." Thus Voltaire's rather striking remark "Il créa le théâtre," whether he meant it literally or somewhat figuratively, was not merely a sweeping statement of a young foreigner who was inaccurate enough to say, a few lines further on, that after *two* hundred years Shakespeare's bizarre and gigantic ideas were passing as sublime; but this is plainly an idea that had been expressed in England and was neither accurate nor original with Voltaire.

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THE CHRONOLOGY OF A GROUP OF POEMS BY W. C. BRYANT

The preface to *The Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant*,¹ edited by Parke Godwin, states that "the poems of Mr. Bryant, collected by him during his lifetime, are here given as he left them, with the exception that they are arranged according to the dates at which they were written or printed, as far as these dates, now attached to the poems, could be ascertained," and adds that "this general collection of his writings is intended to be complete and final."

The Roslyn Edition of *The Poetical Works of William Cullen Bryant*² contains in the publishers' note the statement that the accompanying chronologies of Bryant's Life and Poems and the bibliography of his Poetical and Prose Writings are "the result of several years of careful research" by Mr. Henry C. Sturges.

How far Sturges's chronology of Bryant's Life, "founded on Parke Godwin's biography of Bryant," and his chronology of Bryant's Poems may in general deviate in their statements from those of Godwin in his *Life and Works of William Cullen Bryant*, remains to be demonstrated. A partial comparison made in the

¹ *Life and Works of William Cullen Bryant*. New York, Appleton, 1883-1884. I-II, A Biography . . . ; III-IV, The Poetical Works . . . ; V-VI, Prose Writings. . .

² New York, Appleton, 1903. 1 vol.

course of an investigation of Bryant's relation to German literature indicates close agreement in the dates assigned by the two; but discrepancies noted led to an attempt to discover the actual date of publication of certain poems that appeared in *Graham's Magazine*, and this showed that in a number of cases neither Godwin nor Sturges was right. The proportion of errors was deemed sufficient to justify scepticism as to the correctness of the dating of other poems published in this magazine, and an examination of the volumes for the years (1842-1855) during which Bryant was a contributor brought to light the following surprising facts:

THE POEM	Published according to		Really Appeared in
	Godwin in	Sturges in	
1. The Return of Youth....	Oct., 1842	Oct., 1842	Oct., 1842
2. A Northern Legend.....	Jan., 1843	Jan., 1843	Jan., 1843
3. The Crowded Street.....	Mar., 1843	<i>Jan., 1843</i>	Mar., 1843
4. The Paradise of Tears....	1843	Jan., 1843	<i>Nov., 1844, p. 202</i>
5. The Waning Moon.....	July, 1844	July, 1844	July, 1844
6. The Stream of Life.....	July, 1845	July, 1845	July, 1845 ³
7. The Unknown Way.....	Dec., 1846	Dec., 1846	Dec., 1846
8. The Land of Dreams.....	Jan., 1847	Jan., 1847	<i>Jan., 1848, p. 48</i>
9. "Oh Mother of a Mighty Race".....	July, 1847	July, 1847	<i>Jan., 1847, p. 20</i>
10. The Lady of Castle Wind- eck	June, 1850	(Feb., 1850?)	<i>July, 1850, p. 14</i>
11. The Saw Mill.....	Feb., 1850	Feb., 1850	<i>Feb., 1848, p. 86</i>
12. The Burial of Love.....	1854	1854	<i>Jan., 1851, p. 5</i>
13. The Voice of Autumn....	Jan., 1854	Jan., 1854	Jan., 1854
14. Innocent Child and Snow- White Flower.....			July, 1855, p. 12

In dating the first thirteen poems, then, Godwin made six errors and Sturges seven, while neither mentioned either the variation in title in the sixth, or the last poem in the list. This latter omission is doubtless due to the fact that both assign its publication to the *Talisman* for 1830. The republication of a poem printed twenty-five years earlier is in all probability explained by Godwin's statement (in the Notes) that "the second stanza was wanting in the first form of this poem," the last line of which had also been altered at some time prior to its appearance in 1855 without intimation that it was not a new production.

Insignificant as these inaccuracies may seem at first glance, their number is large enough to make one doubt whether Sturges's state-

³ P. 43, under the title "Song." In the later version the thought of the first four lines is but slightly altered, while the wording is rather less prosaic.

ments are after all so reliable as the publishers wished his readers to believe. And this incredulity is not diminished by the discovery that in matters of biography he was careless in his use of the material collected by Godwin.⁴ There apparently exist, therefore, adequate grounds for caution in accepting the chronology of Godwin, and more especially of Sturges, and the wisdom of independently ascertaining the exact date and place of publication of a poem by Bryant seems fully established for any case in which these are factors of importance.

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NOTES ON FRENCH TENSES

(1) In support of the theory that the past definite tense retains, both in Old French and in the modern language, the use of the Latin perfect, with an implied reference to present time (see "The French Past Definite as Perfect," in *The Romanic Review*, April-June, 1914), the following additional examples may be adduced: "Je vueil aler voir mon cousin Tournemine. Il y a grant temps que je ne le *veis*." Froissart, in *Extraits des chroniqueurs français*, p. 272.—"Je suis juste: tout était bien en harmonie dans l'ex-système de tragédie, mais tout était d'accord aussi dans le système féodal et théocratique, et pourtant il *fut*." A. de Vigny, *Lettre à Lord* . . . (1829. Cf. "Fuit Ilium").—"L'on est un réprouvé si la Débauche vous *planta* 'son premier clou' dans le cœur." Léon Levrault, *La comédie*, p. 102 (1913?).

(2) In the following examples, the past definite seems to have a clearly past anterior or pluperfect meaning: "La borne du chemin, qui *vit* des jours sans nombre. . . . S'est usée en heurtant. . . . Les grands chars gémissants." V. Hugo, *La tristesse d'Olympio*, l. 69 (1837).—"J'ai vu passer soudain . . . une vieille . . . vêtue

⁴ Sturges states (p. lxiii, under 1875) that in September Bryant delivered an address before the Goethe Society. Godwin, however (II, 366 and VI, 335, Note), gives the date as August 27, 1875.

A further error is Sturges's statement (p. lxiv, under 1878) that "on April 10th Bryant attended a 'Commers' given by the German Social Science Association to Bayard Taylor." Bryant's letter (cf. Godwin, II, 392), in which he said: "I saw Bayard Taylor on Monday evening at the 'Commers,'" was written on Wednesday, April 10, 1878. The Kommers must accordingly have been held on April 8, 1878.